

Chapter 2:

Fill in the blank

1. When Ishtar returned after descending to the land of the dead, she returned with _____.

Answer: spring

2. The origin of the god Zeus was _____.

Answer: Indo-European

3. Modern physicians look back on _____, a 4th B.C.E. priest of Asclepius, as a model of dedication to healing.

Answer: Hippocrates

4. In what four activities were early Romans primarily engaged?

_____, _____, _____, and _____.

Answer: farming, homemaking, child raising, war

5. _____ and _____ were the two Roman gods of war.

Answer: Mars and Quirinus

6. During the last century of the Roman Republic Rome itself was considered a deity as reflected in the term _____.

Answer: Dea Roma

7. According to the Commentaries of Julius Caesar, the Celts mostly worshipped a god Caesar identifies as _____/

Answer: Mercury

8. The Romans attempted to suppress the Celts practice of _____.

Answer: human sacrifice

9. Teutonic tradition comes to us chiefly through two Icelandic works, the _____ and _____.

Answer: Poetic Edda, Prose Edda

10. It is believed that Mayan peasants worked on temple building during the times of the year when they were not _____.

Answer: growing maize

Multiple Choice

11. Which of the following is a prominent deity in the Sumero-Akkadian religion?

- a. Dionysus

- b. Hesiod
- c. Hunab Ku
- d. Ishtar

Answer: D

12. The Sumero-Akkadian pantheon numbered nearly

- a. 1000
- b. 1200
- c. 2000
- d. 2200

Answer: C

13. The rise of Babylon brought this Sumero-Akkadian to prominence.

- a. Hammurabi
- b. Marduk
- c. Ninurta
- d. Nabu

Answer: B

14. The Sumerians believed that heaven and earth arose from _____.

- a. air
- b. the stars in the heavens
- c. the primordial sea
- d. the vast cosmos

Answer: C

15. The Gilgamesh Epic tells of a _____ visited upon the earth by angry gods.

- a. earthquake
- b. famine
- c. flood
- d. plague

Answer: C

16. Which of the following was a duty of Zeus?

- a. to bring fish from the sea
- b. to bring rain
- c. to protect the earth
- d. to protect the hearth

Answer: B

17. Hera may have originally been _____.

- a. a cow goddess
- b. a fertility goddess
- c. the goddess of the lakes
- d. the goddess of wild things

Answer: A

18. As a result of his exploits at Delphi, _____ became the god of revelation.
- Apollo
 - Aesculapius
 - Dionysus
 - Zeus

Answer: A

19. Where did Homer depict the gods living?
- at Delphi
 - in the deep of the sea
 - in the underworld
 - on high Olympus

Answer: D

20. How did Hesiod attempt to bring the gods into some semblance of order?
- by acknowledging moira
 - by combining the minor gods into one
 - through theogony
 - by using mysterium tremendum

Answer: C

21. Why did Persephone have to make an annual visit to the underworld?
- she had eaten food while captive in the underworld
 - she had married while captive in the underworld
 - to retain her powers
 - to purify herself in the fires

Answer: A

22. To what did the tragic poets attribute all disasters and doom?
- human frailty
 - immoral behavior by humans
 - the cosmos
 - the gods

Answer: D

23. Plato believed that the Greek gods were dependent in function on _____.
- a higher power
 - fear of the rath of Zeus
 - the immorality of humankind
 - truth, beauty, and goodness

Answer: A

24. Where were the chief holy places of early Rome located?

- a. in a cluster in the heart of Rome
- b. in temples hidden in the countryside
- c. outside the territory of Rome
- d. throughout Rome

Answer: C

25. Which of the following is NOT a deity to whom early Roman farmers turned when they desired success in farming?

- a. Ceres
- b. Consus
- c. Minerva
- d. Saturnus

Answer: C

26. How many days per year did the Roman state prescribe for ceremonies and sacrifices to the Roman deities?

- a. 44
- b. 84
- c. 104
- d. 124

Answer: C

27. In the Roman conceptual system, Jupiter's most exalted title was _____.

- a. Jupiter Optimus
- b. Maximus Pater
- c. Optimus Maximus
- d. Pater Olympus

Answer: C

28. What was the origin of the Sibylline books consulted by Roman priests?

- a. Etruscan
- b. Greek
- c. Iranian
- d. Roman

Answer: B

29. There were three hereditary orders among the Celts of Gaul and of Ireland. What is the term used to identify the priests?

- a. Druides
- b. Equites
- c. Numena
- d. Plebs

Answer: A

30. Which of the following was NOT a primary concern of the Teutonic peoples?

- a. death
- b. fertility
- c. sickness
- d. the end of the world

Answer: C

31. The ancient Mayans focused sharply on the sacred significance of _____.
- a. fruit
 - b. light
 - c. time
 - d. water

Answer: C

32. According to the Mayan conceptual system, the sky dome had how many compartments?
- a. 6
 - b. 7
 - c. 11
 - d. 13

Answer: D

33. How many days were in the Mayan's seasonal maize-crop year?
- a. 120
 - b. 260
 - c. 365
 - d. 380

Answer: C

34. Even in modern times the Maya retain a devout attitude toward which of the following?
- a. material structures
 - b. sources of sustenance
 - c. the association of colors and nature
 - d. the calendar

Answer: C

35. Each stage of a Mayan's life was dominated by what?
- a. calendric horoscopes interpreted by priests
 - b. public ceremonial sacrifices
 - c. the growing cycle of maize
 - d. the shape of the sky dome

Answer: A

CHAPTER 2: Bygone Religions

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- List the major deities of Mesopotamia and discuss their impact on later religious cultures.
- Analyze the origins of Greek gods and explain the intermingling of various religious cultures when conquering societies affect local belief systems.
- Look beyond the classic literature of the Roman period to understand religious foundations and calculate the impact of political aims, imperialism, and transitional socioeconomic conditions on spiritual beliefs.
- Recognize the impact of invading Indo-Europeans on many western religious traditions and describe the unique belief systems the ancient Celts and Teutons carried with them while assimilating with conquered peoples.
- Understand the fundamental attitudes toward devotion and the sacred in ancient Mayan culture.

Chapter Summary

Many major deities arose from the ancient Mesopotamian region. Ishtar was a near universally worshipped female deity of the Sumero-Akkadian and her greatest rival was Marduk of Babylon. The Babylonian myths and epics lend themselves to study through the varied but rich cuneiform inscriptions left behind. Many of the myths have parallels with later religious traditions (e.g. Hebrews). The role of sacrifice, magic, divination and astrology in Babylonian worship are discussed in the context of the precise and accurate instruments they developed.

The influences on the development of Greek deities are addressed and the complex functions of their major deities are explored. Zeus exemplifies the sublimation of local gods by the gods of the northern invaders of Greece as do Hera, his wife, and Apollo. The various roles and origins of Artemis, Hermes, Poseidon, Athena, Demeter, Persephone and Aphrodite are mentioned. The practice of religion in Greece involved household pieties and attendance at festivals (e.g. Athenian). The Mystery religions are a venue for private worship and include the Eleusinian, the Dionysian and Orphic cults. The Greek poets and the defining influence on Greek deities are addressed as is the influence of the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle.

The true nature of Roman religion distinct from the depictions rendered by the literature of the period is discussed from the early period, and from a private or home life perspective. The changes due to the influence of Etruscan dominance, starting in the sixth century BCE are described, chief among them are the imbuing of the gods with anthropomorphic characteristics. The influence of the Greeks and cults from the Eastern Mediterranean areas on Roman religion

are explored. The failure of latter phases of the Roman period and the rise of the Imperial cult to provide a cohesive social force are explored briefly.

Religion in Europe beyond the Alps is observed in the Celts and Teutons. Both had a focus on fertility and practiced sacrificial offerings of animals and humans. The religion of the Maya of Mesoamerica are the last of the religions discussed. Their deities appear in four modes: 1) celestial and remote; 2) fertility and domestic; 3) death and war; and 4) calendar and ceremonial.

Chapter Outline

- I. Mesopotamia
 - A. The Sumero-Akkadian Pantheon
 - 1. Ishtar, a Universal Goddess
 - 2. Marduk of Babylon
 - B. The Babylonian Myths and Epics
 - 1. The Creation
 - 2. The Flood
 - 3. Ishtar Descends to the Land of the Dead, Returns with Spring
 - 4. The Journey of Gilgamesh
 - C. Sacrifice and Magic
 - D. Divination and Astrology
- II. Greece
 - A. The Gathering of the Gods in Early Hellas
 - B. The Mingled Pantheon
 - C. Interaction with the Gods
 - D. The Complex Functions of the Major Deities
 - 1. Zeus
 - 2. Hera
 - 3. Apollo
 - 4. Other Deities
 - E. Homer: The Gods as a Family
 - 1. Divine Functions Rationalized
 - 2. The Primacy of Moira
 - F. Hesiod's Theogony
 - G. The Everyday Religion of the Household
 - H. The Athenian Festivals
 - I. The Mystery Religions
 - 1. The Eleusinian Mysteries
 - 2. The Dionysiac and Orphic Cults
 - J. Greek Religion and the Tragic Poets

- K. The Philosophers and the Gods
 - 1. Plato
 - 2. Aristotle
- III. Rome
 - A. The Religion of Early Rome
 - B. The Religion of the Home
 - C. The Religion of the State
 - 1. Jupiter
 - 2. Mars and Quirinus
 - 3. Janus and Vesta
 - D. Changes Due to Etruscan Influence
 - E. Borrowings from the Greeks
 - F. Cults from Eastern Mediterranean Areas
 - G. The Last Phases
 - H. The Imperial Cult
- IV. Europe Beyond the Alps
 - A. The Celts
 - 1. The Druids
 - 2. Nature Divinities and Fertility Rites
 - 3. Sacrificial Practices
 - B. The Teutons
 - 1. Fertility, Death, and Doom
 - 2. Snorri's Prose Epic
- V. Mesoamerica: the Maya
 - A. The Shape of the World
 - B. The Shape and Feel of Time
 - C. Priests, Royalty, and Peasant
 - D. The Deities
 - 1. Celestial
 - 2. Fertility
 - 3. Death and War
 - 4. Calendric and Ceremonial
 - E. Rites of Passage
 - F. Individual Offerings and Prayers
 - G. Public Ceremonial Sacrifices

Discussions Questions

1. Cosmology is the study (or argument) of first cause. How is this question addressed or recognized in the primal religions from Babylonian to Greek and Roman? What similarities can be found? Do the differences reflect increasing sophistication or something else?
2. Most religious cultures describe their gods in anthropomorphic terms, taking analogies and symbols from human life and personality. Can you think of any modern examples of anthropomorphism in religious cultures? What characteristics are emphasized? What characteristics are similar to those in primal religions?